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melbourne black

A Journal of Melbourne Anarchy

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If you liked ***Melbourne Black***, you might want to check out the Sydney-based *Mutiny* zine.

www.jura.org.au/mutiny

EDITORIAL.

We'd firstly like to thank our comrades in the police association for ensuring the safety of all present at April 9th's anti-racist demonstration.

Furthermore, we laud their actions in holding the demonstrators to a high moral standard. Some lumpen elements of the rally clearly failed to comprehend the importance of presenting a respectable image to the racist main stream of the public. Calls to "Fuck racist tossers" are not only obscene, they alienate racist tossers who may be supportive of the cause! What cause, you ask? Any cause! Any cause that sells the paper, or buys the vote.

Of course, we are referring to the "Fuck borders, fuck bosses, fuck racist tossers" banner. This kind of knee-jerk, oversimplified political discourse is fit only for punk shows full of underage alcoholics. Such dogmatic statements do nothing to win over that cultural monolith, the Australian public. The left should, instead of whining "my way or the fucking highway," seek to emulate the soothing tones of David "Kochie" Koch. Did these "anti-fascist" hooligans stop and think about the necessary borders that protect Australian jobs; the good bosses that go out of their way to hire ethnic minorities, bravely confronting the racism in their communities (and union wages); and the good… um… wait.

We were there to stop the fascists. We were there to make them shit themselves. So fuck borders, fuck bosses, fuck racist tossers, and fuck Australia. ◆

DESIGNATORIAL

The barcodes you see throughout this issue can be scanned with most modern phones and webcams. They will link you straight to the websites mentioned. Go to tinyurl.com/qrprograms to see a list of progams you can download for your phone. Your phone will likely have the program built-in already if it's new-ish.

Plus, they look cool.

—Lumps

EDUCATION MATTERS: A CONVERSATION WITH LOUIS ALTHUSSER. BY SEAMUS

Hello readers. Today in the studio we have with us a super-famous dude, Louis Althusser. He's going to tell us a bit about his essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," then we're going to have a chat about MySchools and what it means for students, because I was supposed to write about that this month.

Seamus: How's it going Louis?
Louis: Super-awesome, I guess. Can I pinch a rollie?

Help yourself. Now, for those who don't know, Louis was a member of the Communist Party in France during the riots of May 1968 in Paris. The next year he wrote this essay which still provides some useful insights for how to understand the State and, um, ideology. So Louis, can you tell us why you decided to write this essay?
Well, as you said, it was right after the whole "May '68" thing. The whole affair was a bit depressing. As you know, the workers went out on strike, a really massive strike, as did the students. A lot of the students were calling for some really revolutionary things. That was the high point of Situationism and so on. It was impressive: these kids, many of whom had never had a real job, had developed some amazing critiques of capitalism. But then the workers' strike ended and, when the students refused to disperse, the police kicked the living shit out of them.

The Sound of Jets
Date: Saturday, May 1st—May 16th
Location: 69 Smith Street Gallery, Fitzroy
Info: Focus on war, trauma, violence and control during the Israeli siege on Gaza from Dec 2008 to Jan 2009. Series of photographs and audio recordings taken in the Negev/Naqab Desert and in the West Bank.
http://jessieboylan.com
Contact: 0457 777 504

May Day March
Date: Sunday, May 2nd
Location: Victorian Trades Hall
Cnr Lygon & Victoria Sts, Carlton South

One day Gathering: Latin America, Australia and the Pacific
Date: Saturday, May 15th
Time: 11AM—5PM,
Who: Latin American Solidarity Network (L.A.S.NET) - *Red de Solidaridad con los Pueblos Latinoamericanos*
Info: Inspiring, Resisting, Creating new possibilities for change.
www.latinlasnet.org
Speakers: Edgar Páez: Sinaltrainal national leader from Colombia, Clive Porabou & Joanne Dateransi from Bougainville—Winning against Rio Tinto, Australian union representative , Jim Green—Anti-Uranium activist from A.C.E., Robbie Thorpe—Aboriginal leader from Victoria, Aboriginal representative from Northern Territory Communities (T.B.C.)
Location: E.T.U. Building , 1/200 Arden St., North Melbourne

National 'Andrew Bolt is a Dickhead' Day
Date: Thursday, June 3 (and every day thereafter)
Time: 12:05AM—11:55PM
Info: **http://tinyurl.com/boltwanker**
Location: Wherever you want it to be, honey

Fantin Reading Group
Date: Every second Wednesday
Time: 7PM—
Loation: M.A.R.C., 62 St Georges Rd, Northcote
Info: **fantinreadinggroup.wordpress.com**
Contact: **melbourneanarchistclub@gmail.com**

UPCOMING EVENTS.

Defend Trade Unions in Colombia: Campaign Launch

Date: Thursday, April 29
Time: 6:30pm—9:30pm
Location: e.t.u. Comrades Bar
Street: Cnr Swanstion & Queensbury Sts
Contact: **lasnet@latinlasnet.org**
0438 496 433

MAY DAY PROTEST IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEES

Date: Saturday, May 1
Time: 12pm—3pm
Location: Victorian Trades Hall
Cnr Lygon & Victoria Sts, Carlton South

May Day barbeque and drinks at MARC

Date: Saturday, May 1
Time: 3pm—7pm
Location: m.a.r.c., 62 St Georges Rd, Northcote
R.S.V.P: **melbourneanarchistclub@gmail.com**

May Day Housing Action, organised by Renegade Activists

Date: Saturday, May 1
Time: 12pm—4pm
Location: t.b.a.
Info: **http://tinyurl.com/raafhouse**
Contact: **renegadeactivist@gmail.com**
0402 657 392

Femicide in Juarez Mexico— Speak Out & Pink Cross

Date: Saturday, May 1
Time: 12pm—1pm
Location: State Library of Victoria steps & lawn,
Cnr Swanston & La Trobe Sts
Info: **http://tinyurl.com/juarezfem**

Sounds pretty bad.
Pretty fucking bad, Seamus. So I guess I wrote the essay as part of an effort to figure out why this uprising, which seemed to suit the Marxist predictions of what a revolution in an industrialised country ought to look like, flopped so horribly. I eventually concluded it was due to the actions of the state.

What's your view on the State?
Pretty orthodox, Seamus. I go back to *The Communist Manifesto*. Marx summed it up well. The state is just a gang of capitalists co-operating to accomplish their collective aims. See, every capitalist has to worry about reproducing the means of production: where will I get my raw materials? How much maintainence do I have to have done on my machinery? Is it time to upgrade my software? Whatever. But there's a much bigger problem that no individual capitalist could ever tackle, so that's why they make the state.

What's this "bigger problem?"
It's reproducing the relations, not the means, of production. Even if you get all of your factories and roads and raw materials and shit, you still need workers. So how do you convince each new generation of proletarians to grow up and get shitty jobs? How do you convince them that the state is there for their own protection? How do you prevent a revolution, which is basically a refusal to participate in capitalism, in Mario Tronti's terms? This is what the state's for. And some other things, sure, but mostly to reproduce the relations of production.

So how does the State do this?
The state has two basic means at its disposal: the repressive state apparatuses (r.s.a.s) and the ideological state apparatuses (i.s.a.s). The r.s.a.s work primarily by coercion: things like the army and the police. If you refuse to participate in capitalism, or if your behaviour in some way threatens capital accumulation, if you happen to be sitting on oil or uranium or something and won't get out of the way, the r.s.a.s fuck you up until you either submit or you're dead or in prison or something. But, of course, if this were all the state had at its disposal, it would be constant war, all the time. You see this in some parts of the world: Columbia, for instance. The trade unions are mostly being held down by sheer violence of paramilitaries.

But the paramilitaries are mostly hired by private companies, not the State. The State just allows it to happen.
(shrugs) I don't really care about the difference. The whole public/private thing is

So ideology is a little more complicated than false consciousness.

an invention of the capitalist state anyway, used mostly for its own convenience. If something is "public" then you're supposed to be thankful for it, if something's "private" you're supposed to accept that it's outside of democratic control (I mean, bourgeois democracy is a joke, but sometimes it raises troublesome questions). But anyway, like I said, pure violence usually doesn't work, not without someone else funding the violence anyway (like an imperialist country), and it isn't really that profitable either. So the state also has the Ideological State Apparatuses. Unlike the R.S.A.S, these don't work primarily through coercion and violence, but through persuasion. They convince you that your best interests and your only really chances are offered by the capitalist system.

So they promote a false consciousness? I've heard this theory before: we have institutions that convince us that free markets are great, that representative democracy is actually democratic, that war is inevitable, etc.

No. I think that was a theory made up by some really lazy leftists. It assumes most people are really stupid, and only the leftists know what's really going on. Actually, very few people have this real "false consciousness" except crazy super-conservatives. It's too unbelievable! When I was walking around Paris after the riot, I overheard a lot of conversations by "normal" middle-class Parisians, the kind of people who had sat idly by while these revolutionary kids were getting their heads kicked in. And you know what? They didn't have this "false consciousness." They were saying that the kids had had some good ideas, that the state shouldn't have acted like it did, that the unions had some reasonable demands, and so forth. Except the conservatives, yeah, but for the most part they didn't hold the kind of illusions about capitalism that you'd expect them to based on their behaviour. But on the other hand they'd finish it up with "These ideas were unworkable, I have a mortgage to pay" and so on. So ideology is a little more complicated than false consciousness.

So what are the I.S.A.s, and how do they work? How is "ideology" different from simple false consciousness?

The ISAs include churches, political parties, the patriarchal family, and so on. But I think the most important ISA is the school.

Barricade Books/Infoshop

Bookshop and a fucking awesome shared library with Loophole. Bookshop open Friday and Saturday 2-7pm, library everyday 2-7pm

Web: **barricade.org.au**
Email: **barricadeinfoshop@riseup.net**

Bash Back! Melbourne

See ad on page 15.

Black Star

Long running anarchist P.A. service, probably done the sound at any punk show you've been at recently.

Email: **subnet@netspace.net.au**

Fight Dem Back!

Fighting race-hate in Australia.

Web: **www.fightdemback.org**

Footscray Anarchist Group

Shameless self-promotion.

Email: **footscrayanarchy@gmail.com**

Fantin Reading Group

Fortnightly anarchist reading group. Meets twice a month. Contact details and readings are available through the blog if you're interested.

Web: **fantinreadinggroup.wordpress.com**

Girl Gang

Currently proposing street fighting and zine writing. Fuck Yeah!

Web: **girlgangs.wordpress.com**
Email: **girlgangs@riseup.net**

Industrial Worker's of the World (IWW)

One big union!

Mail: P.O. Box 145, Moreland, VIC. 3058
Phone: 0448 712 420
Email: melb@iww.org.au

K.P. Solidarity

Solidarity network for the Kulon Progo Farmers in Indonesia, who are currently been forced off their land to make way for an iron mine.

Web: **kpsolidarity.wordpress.com**
Email: **kpsoli@gmail.com**

Latin American Solidarity Network (L.A.S.Net)

Supporting grassroots and Indigenous struggles. Not a front for a Trot party. Fuck Coca-Cola.

Web: **latinlasnet.org**
Email: **lasnet@latinlasnet.org**

Loophole Community Centre

670 High Street, Thornbury, open 7 days, 2-7 pm.

Web: **loopholecommunitycentre.org**
Email: **loopholecommunitycentre@gmail.com**

Melbourne Anarchist Club

The Melbourne Anarchist Club is… a club for Melbourne anarchists. It owns and runs M.A.R.C., the Melbourne Anarchist Resource Centre which is… a resource centre for Melbourne anarchists (still under construction but nearly finished!)

Web: **mac.anarchobase.com**
Email: **melbourneanarchistclub@gmail.com**
Mail: P.O. Box 494, Brunswick, VIC, 3056.

Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group

Web: melbourneanarchistcommunistgroup.org

Renegade Activist Action Force

A bunch of political shit-stirrers.

Email: renegadeactivist@gmail.com

GET OFF YR ARSE!

A list of active groups and projects in Mel*burn* that I know and like, with a short overview of what they do when not self-explanatory. Apologies for any I may have forgotten. Contact us and remind me!— xxx Mike.

Anarchist Black Cross

Anarchist prisoner support network.
Web: **abcmelb.wordpress.com**
Email: **abcmelb@yahoo.com.au**

Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation (ASF-IWA)

Web: **http://asf-iwa.org.au/**

Anarres

Anarchist mail-order book service and roaming book stall. Headquarters are now in Melbourne Anarchist Resource Centre (see below).
Web: **www.anarres.org.au** [under construction]
Mail: P.O. Box 150,
Brunswick East, VIC. 3057

Australia-Asia Worker Links

Facilitating international class struggle
Web: **aawl.org.au**
Email: **aawl@aawl.org.au**
Phone: (03) 9663 7277

Cool! Maybe you can explain ideology in relation to MySchool?
No problem. I have two basic theses about ideology, which I put forward in my essay [clears throat]:

THESIS I: Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.

THESIS II: Ideology has a material existence.

Wow, nice theses. What do they mean?
Well let's take thesis one. The idea of "imaginary relationships." Rather than being about the ideas you have about whether capitalism is good or bad, or the state is nice or mean, ideology is based on how you think you relate to them. So MySchool, NAPLAN, the whole standards movement in education, they're all based on getting kids to take these really culturally biased tests. You're basically screwed if you're not white and middle-class. So kids might be sitting there thinking, "This knowledge has nothing to do with my life, this test is bullshit, my teachers are just jerks." So they've got "resistant" ideas about the world. But what are their ideas about their relationships? Well, that's where thesis two comes in. Their relationship to the world is something they act out in a material way. So even if you find a fifteen-year-old kid who says all kind of radical stuff about school, look at how he or she actually lives those relationships. They submit to the teacher's authority. They act in accordance with the judgement placed on them. They get the jobs that the test, that the whole education system, says they're suited for.

You're kind of talking generally about education there, though. Tell me more about MySchool.
Well it's really going to intensify kids' experience of being "sorted" for future employment (or future unemployment, or prison, or rehab, or mental institutions, whatever). Let's say you've got little Timmy. Timmy's a little shit. He listens to punk music and drops acid when he should be studying or whatever. Now Timmy's teachers are going to be looking at his test scores. They're going to be looking at how much he disrupts class, and drags down the rest of the students' test scores. They're going to be looking at that cheque from the government and saying, "If we got rid of little Timmy, our test average would jump a few points. We'd get more money to teach the kids who actually stand a chance. Everyone knows little Timmy's just going to be a junkie anyway, so what's the point of educating him?" This is the kind of logic that

got applied in one Texas school district in light of No Child Left Behind, which is the same kind of policy framework as MySchool. This school district noticed that Latino kids weren't scoring high enough on the tests, so they actually started encouraging them to drop out. Talk about leaving kids behind! This kind of policy really intensifies the pressure for teachers to perform the role of reproducing the relations of production, and that means some kids have to be socialised as janitors or drug dealers.

How do kids get socialised into these different roles?
Well, ideology basically works through a process I call "interpolation." A cop shouts "HEY YOU!" Or a teacher calls your name. Or your lover asks whether you love them. Depending on who's calling you, you're required to respond in one of several ways. You have to acknowledge your role as a subject, whatever you do. You can say "Yes officer, yes sir, yes dear" and be a good little subject. That's your trip. Or you can be a nasty little cunt of a subject and say "Fuck you, fuck you, I'm fucking someone else." It doesn't matter. You've still accepted all that is necessary for the relations of production. Bad subjects can be made to work and consume. Just different jobs.

So drug dealers and disruptive students and the like... these jobs are just as good for capitalism? Really?
Don't be so naïve. Of course they are. Even serial killers and terrorists are good for capitalism. Do you have any idea how big the private prison industry is? Or the electronic surveillance industry? Psychiatric medicine? What's the difference! If you won't willingly work and consume, you can be forced to work and consume. As for the drugs trade, legal/illegal trade is just as artificial as private/public. Drug money kept the banking system afloat during the last recession.

So how do we resist? Are there any alternatives to simply being reproduced in our class roles?
…Right now, we're screwed.

You weren't supposed to say that.
It's true. Look, Marx teaches us that the political and cultural superstructures of a society rest on the economic structures surely as a house rests upon its foundations. Look around you. It's obvious that society has not yet reached a revolutionary stage.

But that's so stupid! We can't just wait for a revolutionary stage to happen before we start resisting!
Well, resist all you like, but it doesn't mean shit.

That's not true. All around the world, people are building up revolutionary alternatives to capitalism. They're not waiting for your structures to catch up with them. They're making the structures themselves.
[sighs] You remind me of those kids in Paris. Let me put it really simply, in a way that even a student can understand. Until the material base of society changes, there are two kinds of resistance. There are those that actually achieve some sort of revolutionary potential, and they are crushed by the repressive state apparatuses. Every time.

So just because the cops aren't kicking down my door

> "The delegates appointed by the different Committees connected with the Building Trades hereby give notice that it has been unanimously resolved, at their Trade Meetings, to commence the eight-hour system on Monday the 21st instant, by beginning work at 7AM, and leaving off at 5PM, deducting two hours for meals, till the 23rd of August of each year, and the remaining months from 6 till 4. The hours of meals during the winter months to be: Breakfast, from 9 till 10; dinner, 1 to 2: and from 8 till 9, and 12 till 1 in the summer."

On April 21st, stonemasons, whilst building Melbourne University, downed tools and lead a winding march to Parliament House, attracting fellow workers on route, to demand the eight hour day. By May 1st, employers in the building trade had largely conceded defeat, agreeing 'to pay the same amount of wages as formerly for ten hours' labour'. From 1879, the eight-hour day was a public holiday in Victoria. Whilst the struggle for the eight hour day varies from place to place, May Day remains an important date for its internationalist traditions.

May Day should remind us that all the concessions wrested from the ruling class, like the eight hour day, have been due to working class organising, struggle and agitation, not from nice bosses or the right political leaders. With the continuing attacks on wages, conditions and job security through casualisation; the practical criminalisation of strike action; and the forces of a global market throwing thousands of Australian workers into unemployment and further entrenching poverty in the Global South; the need for working class self-organisation, and strong, Internationalist, fighting unions, is as vital as ever.

Events occurring on May Day in Melbourne this year are fantastically diverse. They include actions on Indigenous and refugee rights; an event against the ongoing femicide in Juarez, Mexico; an action against the Melbourne housing crisis; the traditional Sunday worker's march; and all the usual piss-ups and BBQs. The struggle against Capitalism should not only occur at the point of production. Those oppressed by Capitalism are far more diverse than Marx's Industrial Proletariat (let's face it, its euro-centric and male dominated). It is exciting to see such diversity represented this May Day, and can only help build a dynamic and multifaceted movement. In our desire to smash capitalism and the State, and replace it with a free society, we must build a movement inclusive of the needs of all people who find themselves oppressed by capitalist society. ◆

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MAY DAY. ◆ BY MIKE

May Day began in 1886 when workers all over the United States took strike action calling for the eight hour day.

It was followed by the subsequent framing and false trial of 8 Anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist unionists who had played a key roll in the movement. Four men—**August Spies, Albert Parsons, Adolph Fischer** and **George Engel**—were subsequently hung by the State. A fifth man, Louis Ling, committed suicide on the eve of his execution. The three remaining men had their sentences commuted to life sentences and the campaign to free them from prison, which was eventually successful, gave May Day its immediate resonance as a symbol of international workers solidarity. The Second International declared May 1st as International Worker's Day, and May 1st 1890 set as the date for international strike action and demonstrations for the eight hour day. International Workers Day, May 1st, continues to be celebrated by workers to this day.

Of course, in Melbourne, the struggle for the eight hour day was won much earlier. Following working class organising and agitation, on April 19th, 1856 the committees in the Melbourne Building Trades made this provocative public announcement:

all of my efforts amount to nothing?

Be realistic. You write in your 'zine. You go to meetings and rallies. Sometimes you even hand out leaflets! Wow. So you've created this whole imaginary relationship between yourself and capitalism. You say, "I do these things. I am a rebel." But what are the real conditions of your existence? You chase your little career opportunities. You spend your money. You buy food. You buy train tickets. You look both ways before you cross the street. You stop your conversations when authority figures walk by. You're nothing but a fucking slave, Seamus.

And you're nothing but a fucking tosser, Louis Althusser.

End. ◆

If you haven't figured it out yet, the preceding interview is entirely fictional. What little I know about Louis Althusser I gleaned from wikipedia. I think he's actually dead. (checks wikipedia). Yeah, he's dead. The essay, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', is, however, real. I've tried to use this format to make some interesting ideas accessible to a wider audience. I hope, in that, I've succeeded. I tend to agree with criticisms that Althusser's theory is too structural, his reading of Marx is rather superficial, and he allows absolutely no room for human agency, for our powers to design projects that can change society. But I also think his ideas about ideology, about the way we imagine our relationship to the world, the focus on material conditions, and the power of interpolation to make us take on pre-determined roles, are all useful ones. I think these are ideas that could inform the left's discussion of ideology, which tends to fall into the "false consciousness" model far too often. You see this, particularly, in the climate movement. "Most people just don't understand." Well, climate change is common knowledge, so we need a more sophisticated explanation for why the coal plants aren't being dismantled by workers as we speak. Althusser's theories suggest some new tactics, beyond "consciousness raising" that seems to take up so much of our time. So, please, take some time to consider these ideas, and please don't despair. My next article will be about how to start a guerilla war in school.

Suggested reading:

Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', **http://tinyurl.com/althusser**

The Pinky Show, 'What is the Matrix?' **http://tinyurl.com/althussermatrix**

This is an amazing exploration of Althusser's theory in relation to the film The Matrix. If you found my article even vaguely interesting, I can promise you'll find this amazing. I also stole the idea of using a conversation to explore Althusser's theory from these guys. I love the Pinky Show.

THE AUSTRALIAN FAR RIGHT. BY SLACKBASTARD

The last major hurrah for the far right in Melbourne was in the mid-to-late 1990s, when members of the neo-Nazi group 'National Action' staged several rallies and even opened a shopfront bunker in Fawkner.

Sadly for the Master Race, in 1998 the shop closed, and N.A. collapsed; its Fuehrer, Michael (de) Brander, returning to Adelaide. Since then, there's been the occasional fascist outrage, but no really significant organisational development (unlike other states, the One Nation Party was never a significant factor in Victorian politics). Nevertheless, the far right continues to cheer from the sidelines more mainstream forms of bigotry and intolerance, hoping and waiting for an opportunity to harness that hatred and resentment and to put it to work in its own interests: the groups listed below are among the most prominent groups who fantasise about doing so.

Australian Defence League: Currently a figment of the imagination of a few racist malcontents, the ADL was partially responsible for the stunning victory that was the April 9 "mass rally" (see page 12 in this issue). Bigger and better things are no doubt expected, but seem unlikely in horribly multicultural Melbourne.

Australia First Party: Established in 1996 by former Labor M.P. Graeme Campbell, the current incarnation of A.F. is led by Lebanese-Australian Dr James

Dear Uncle Joe,
I have been in a relationship with my girlfriend for over a year now, yet despite my persistent requests she refuses to join the Party. I love her like a close comrade, yet this situation is causing me a great deal of pain.
What is to be done?

Sleeping with the enemy

Dear Sleeping,
The first thing you need to do is diagnose the problem. Is she a worker who has not yet reached class consciousness or a bourgeois counter-revolutionary? Does she show any Trotskyist or Anarchist tendencies? Ask her about the States where Capitalism has been overthrown. Is she critical of China, Cuba or North Korea? In any event, her stubbornness indicates that she is clearly undermining the Revolution, which demands a cure that is as severe as it is just. Revolutionary Re-Education followed by an extended probationary period in which she can achieve atonement through honest manual labour. This will no doubt require an extended break in communication with your girlfriend.

Do not fear though, young Comrade, all is not lost! Following the imminent collapse of Capitalism and the subsequent establishment of the Worker's State, this reactionary relationship will no longer be a cause for concern. In our post-Revolutionary Worker's Utopia, with the benefits of re-education, be assured that she will submit to both you and the Party, joyously fulfilling her Revolutionary duties of procreation, child rearing, and domestic labour.

Finally, her refusal to join the party is not criminal (although highly suspect and wholly bourgeois) but, should she engage in any further reactionary behaviour of this nature I suggest you sever the relationship immediately or face trial for Trotskyist crimes against the Revolution.
Sincerely, ***—Joe***

Dear Uncle Joe,
I have recently been feeling attracted to male Comrades in the Party. These feelings are new to me, and I'm somewhat bewildered and confused. I was raised in a very conservative family and am struggling to get my bearings at the moment.
I desperately need your guidance at this time. How should I act on these feelings?

Questioning

Dear Questioning,
Trotskyist. Titoist. Fag.***—Joe***

DEAR UNCLE JOE.

Problems? Dilemmas? Capitalism got you down? Uncle Joe will fix everything. Email melbourneblack@gmail.com with 'Uncle Joe' as the subject heading.

Saleam from his bunker in Tempe, NSW. In Melbourne, the party's interests are represented by a post office box in Croydon. Note that while A.F. has threatened, on several occasions, to stand a candidate in an election in Victoria, it has yet to do so: a reflection of its relative political weakness in this state.

Australian Protectionist Party: Like A.F., the A.P.P. has a post office box in Croydon, from which location the retarded younger brother of A.F. (it formed in 2007 as a split) occasionally produces a magazine, titled *Destiny*. Apart from cranky diatribes, *Destiny* sports the bestest covers ever seen on the face of local fascist *samizdat*. (No really: they're fucking awesome.) Politically, while both parties are opposed to the 'Asianisation' of Australia—and almost all the other bugbears of the far right—the A.P.P. distinguishes itself from A.F. by blaming everything on The Muslims rather than The Jews.

Blood & Honour: A promotional service for neo-Nazi skinheads, B&H has been making noise in Australia for over 20 years, its greatest gift to the world of neo-Nazi muzak being undoubtedly the band Fortress, whose final gig took place in Melbourne in 2008. The current Victorian organiser for B&H is small businessman Justin O'Brien, the owner of 'Hold Fast Body Art' tattoo studio in Burwood. In September 2009, O'Brien declared war on anti-fascists in Melbourne by threatening a group of strangers meeting at the Melbourne Anarchist Resource Centre. O'Brien declared that he would return if there was any more anti-fascist activity in Melbourne, so readers of ***Melbourne Black*** should presumably consider themselves as being placed on notice.

Citizens Electoral Council: Followers of U.S. bizarro Lyndon La Rouche, the C.E.C. deserves an essay all of its own. In the meantime, a few fun facts: according to La Rouche, The Beatles (who "had no genuine musical talent") were created by the "British Psychological Warfare Division" and promoted "by agencies which are controlled by British intelligence". Furthermore, the Queen of England and the British royal family run the global drug trade.

The Creativity Movement: Principally known for the violent antics of its followers in the US—especially in the late 1990s and early 2000s—thanks to the indefatigable efforts of Melbourne local the 'Reverend' Patrick O'Sullivan, the bizarro cult known as 'Creativity' is better-known in Melbourne for its promotional stickers ('White Man Awake!')

PINK MAN BE WAKE UP! E
YOU BIRTHRIGHT STOLEN E
PINK MAN! AWAKE!
SOMEONE TO BLAME!
Where you slaves & virgins? You eat rage, shit poison.
• WE WAIT LONG FOR ALL YOU DEATH •
THE CHURCH OF THE DIRT PO BOX 18 CARLTON SOUTH VIC 3053

A parody of the racist World Church of the Creator stickers that appeared on the streets of Melbourne around 5 years ago.

and the frequently drunken incoherence of its chief (and only) proselytiser. Herr Reverend is also infamous for his love of knives: a passion which culminated in 2002 when he was sentenced to several years in jail for stabbing someone who questioned his nutzism.

Eureka Youth League: The E.Y.L. is the new name given to the old trick known as the 'Patriotic Youth League', A.F.'s short-lived yoof wing. In Melbourne, the P.Y.L's chief and only spokesperson was Luke Connors, who in a fit of excitement following the Cronulla riot in December 2005, predicted many more such 'White civil uprisings' for our fair city—before retiring from the P.Y.L with a suspected case of brain cancer. As for the P.Y.L itself, it eventually became the sole property of an entertainingly batshit middle-aged tennis-player from Brisbane named John Drew: the newly-born E.Y.L. bears an uncanny resemblance to this decrepit P.Y.L, at least insofar as it too is the plaything of a middle-aged racist. In the case of the E.Y.L., it's the veteran fascist Brendan Gidley.

Hammerskins: Born in the U.S.A., the (Southern Cross) Hammerskins are a neo-Nazi skinhead gang which works in close collaboration with B&H. In the last few years, the Hammerskins have formalised their resemblance to an O.M.C. by forming 'Crew 38' for probationary members of the gang. Note that the presence of B&H and the Hammerskins in the local punk and skinhead music scene has been defended by otherwise unaligned groups and individuals—a product, in part, of their longevity and, consequently, many overlapping friendship networks, but also the yuppification and depoliticisation of the genre.

Klu Klux Klan: Along with boneheads, the K.K.K. is a perennial favourite of the tabloid media, and while it's true that one or two pointyheads have popped up in the last few years to claim that the Invisible Empire

society, is mortally opposed to it. If communisation must be "immediate", then so must the destruction of the state. History has shown repeatedly that where communisation has been attempted, it has to destroy the state or be destroyed by it. Attempts to use the state in Russia led to the class being crushed by its own "representatives"; ignoring the state in Spain likewise led to its crushing of the working class' attempts at communisation. Regardless of whether Marx saw a role for the state, the clearest marxists have recognised the necessity of its immediate destruction for over 90 years.

To conclude, the opposition isn't between anarchism and marxism, but between communism (as the actual movement to abolish the present state of things) and capitalism (in both its leftist and right-wing forms). We can get hung up on names, but what is important is the content: do these groups through their theory and activity attempt to negate capital, or do they merely reproduce it?

All comments and criticisms welcomed and appreciated. ◆

And of course we can't forget the State. It's not a neutral institution; it can't be captured or put to our own purposes and must be destroyed.

which still operate as capitalist enterprises and compete with other enterprises on the market. Lacking a boss, it's up to the workers themselves to cut their own wages and make themselves work harder, so that they are still able to realize the value of their products on the market. Of course, in a coop it's even harder to resist such attacks, because you can't go on strike against yourself. Even the bourgeois media is realizes the possibilities presented by coops as a means of reducing the risk of class conflict while maintaining capitalist production. The same logic applies on a larger scale, in things like widespread workplace occupations. As long as workplaces exist as enterprises separate from one another, even if they are completely democratic, they still have to compete, and as long as they remains workplaces, i.e. places separated from the rest of society, where work occurs as a separate activity, then alienation and exploitation occur.

Self-organisation is absolutely necessary, but it isn't enough. In situations of generalized unrest where the class is strong enough to forcibly take control of workplaces of its own accord (rather than just because the business is going bust), rather than just stop there and continue under a kind of workers' government of self-managed exploitation (i.e. a federation of occupied workplaces continuing business as usual), the possibility actually exists for the class to revolutionise production and destroy enterprises as such. Here, the opportunity exists for communisation, of appropriating society and suppressing commodity production, of immediately putting the things and places we seize to a different purpose, one aimed solely at meeting our needs and desires. Goods will be circulated without money, some factories might be kept open but drastically rearranged to minimize work and opened to the neighbourhood, others where work is too alienating might be completely destroyed. In other words, it will be a process of breaking the separations in our society, but it will be one that can only success if it continues to spread, and will die if it limits itself to self-management.

And of course we can't forget the State. It's not a neutral institution; it can't be captured or put to our own purposes and must be destroyed. If communisation is about creating new, direct relations between people, then the state, being the centralisation and concentration of capitalist relations as a force which preserves this

is, like God, everywhere and nowhere all at once, nobody takes them too seriously (including, one suspects, the K.K.K. themselves). Certainly, the K.K.K. was disappointed when members of the Southern Cross Soldiers (see below) refused to don bedsheets as a substitute for the national flag.

League of Rights: The oldest still-extant group on the far right, the League was established following the end of WW2, and served as a vehicle for dead fascist Eric Butler's paranoias and never-realised political ambitions. The group has a bookshop—Room 201, 2nd Floor, 145 Russell Street—which contains many weird and wonderful texts, and a small coterie of elderly followers.

Nationalist Alternative: The new kid on the fascist block, N.A. resembles the earlier N.A. ('National Action'), although with a larger proportion of students and, as yet, no body count. N.A. has received some small amount of media coverage during the course of its brief existence, and seeks to cultivate a more sophisticated approach to cultural and social change than hitting people over the head and putting up stickers.

New Right/national anarchists: After emerging in a blaze of silence in Sydney in September 2007, the gnats have been buzzing less and less as time has progressed. Despite being coached by veteran neo-Nazi Welf Herfurth, the racist teenyboppers who've felt drawn to his nutzi Blue Steel have failed to impress on the field, the naughty children being told to shoo whenever their ugly little heads have presented themselves in public. As a tricksy remedy for their marginality, however, every gnat has a blog. Last year, a blog by someone briefly seconded to Melbourne was abandoned after the author returned to Tasmania. 'Andreas' left behind him a kid called Scott in Geelong, another called Sam in Hamilton (in rural Victoria), and not much else.

One Nation Party: Pauline Hanson's Victorian cousin continues to eke out an existence, but is in very poor health and, as its tiny membership appears to consist almost entirely of old age pensioners, it's not expected to do much more than die in future.

Southern Cross Soldiers: More of a yoof gang for twinks than a far-right political formation, the S.C.S. formed a couple of years ago to celebrate their love of all things White and Australian. Rumours that the patriotic militia was formed by a businessman in the local clothing industry are unconfirmed, but the S.C.S. may be found wherever young people think that the latest thing in fashion is to wear the Australian flag: as a hat, t-shirt, shorts, thongs and underwear—preferably all at once.

White Noise Productions: The latest in a long series of incursions into the local metal scene by fascists, this one being spearheaded by 'Gareth Sansom'. White Noise Productions (nudge nudge, wink wink) dipped its toe into the water of open promotion of nutzism (B&H/Hammerskins) before deciding that caution was the better part of valour, and climbed back into its closet. ◆

UNITE AGAINST RACISM RALLY. BY SLACKBASTARD

On Friday April 9, a "mass rally against immigrants and Islam" was scheduled to take place at Flinders Street Station in the city.

The rally had been organised on Facebook by a previously unheard-of group calling itself 'Melbourne Action Against Immigration and Islam', and received the endorsement of the 'Australian Defence League' (a.d.l.), the 'Australian Protectionist Party' (a.p.p.), and the 'Southern Cross Soldiers'(s.c.s.).

In response to this racist provocation, a counter-rally was organised, meeting at Flinders St an hour prior to the rally's declared start so as to prevent or to disrupt its taking place. As it happens, the "mass" rally proved to be a non-event, with the steps of Flinders St being occupied from midday until 2pm by hundreds of opponents, the counter-rally being addressed by a range of speakers—religious, socialist and trade union (it appears that the rally was endorsed by the Victorian Trades hall Council). The only trace of individuals "against immigrants and Islam" was a solitary and obviously inebriated bonehead, together with a small number of his mates, all forced to drown their sorrows across the roads at Young and Jackson's.

This outcome was not entirely unexpected, and confirmed the apparent inexperience of the rally's putative organisers. Thus the text which accompanied the event on Facebook,

So if leftism offers no alternative to capital (and indeed reinforces its logic), then what does that leave us? Against leftism, I would oppose the communist movement. By "communism" I don't mean a movement of marxist-leninist ideologues to build a party and put it in power, but rather I mean "the real movement which abolishes the present state of things," that is, the concrete activity of ordinary people to oppose the domination of capital and its State over their everyday lives, and to assert their needs and desires against capital's logic, which seeks only to commodify those desires, and subject them to its profit motive. This movement of capital-negation can takes many forms, from small isolated 'faceless resistance' at work like theft, sabotage and slacking off, to large, collective struggles like mass strikes, riots and insurrections. Such struggles may not call themselves 'communist', but where they involve people asserting the logic of their needs over the logic of capital, then they are communist in practice. After all, if a society based on desires and needs is to come about, it will only be through people actively doing so. So the seeds of the new society can be glimpsed in the struggles happening today.

Of course, that's not to say that these types of struggle are inherently revolutionary in all times and places, and we should critically examine the content of such struggles whenever they occur. Even when struggles are unsuccessful or for minor gains, they are revolutionary when they help the strikers get together and realise what they are, and can do. On the other hand, even the largest struggles can end up as negative factors from the point of view of proletarian emancipation when they reinforce the integration of labour into capital.

One last point I want to touch on, is the one about self-organisation and autonomy as the ultimate goal, which Conal makes when he says "the workers' assembly therefore is the highest principle of anarchism". I think this is somewhat problematic. Self-organisation is certainly necessary, but it shouldn't be seen as an end in itself. This is because there nothing inherently anti-capitalist in self-organisation; workers' control and total democracy do not threaten capital in and of their selves. This is because capital rules social life both hierarchically, through the boss or the manager, and horizontally, through so-called 'market forces'. At one end of the scale, we have things like workers' cooperatives,

Closer to home, where the possibility actually exists of influencing things, we see leftist groups deny workers' ability to self-organise, and support the institutions suppressing workers' struggles.

Because they don't really believe in the possibility of the class struggling in its own interests to negate itself and capital, they see struggle as merely following whichever capitalist faction is "less evil".

those for whom they struggle. It certainly doesn't alter the leftists' own situation. This is not to say that individuals are unable to escape and overcome their leftism, and many do by looking critically at their own politics and activity.

Leftist groups, on the other hand, are essentially capitalist institutions. Their political positions on such things as the unions, nationalism, parliament, etc, rule out the possibility of the class struggling in its own interests, and their activities serve only to derail class struggle into dead-end capitalist 'solutions'. Because they don't really believe in the possibility of the class struggling in its own interests to negate itself and capital, they see struggle as merely following whichever capitalist faction is "less evil". In the abstract world of support for far away struggles, we see such things as cheerleading of "humanitarian" wars for oil and gas in East Timor, or calls for people to put some abstract notion of 'resistance' above their own survival and line up and be slaughtered to further the interests of capitalist factions like Hamas and Hezbollah (dressed up as "critical support").

Closer to home, where the possibility actually exists of influencing things, we see leftist groups deny workers' ability to self-organise, and support the institutions suppressing workers' struggles. A recent example is the January 2010 Pluto wildcat strikes in the Pilbara of over 1000 construction workers for better living conditions, the largest struggle so far this year, and one that largely happened outside union control, through the workers' own self-activity. On the few occasions leftist groups actually bothered to report these struggles it was to celebrate the unions as defenders of the working class and the agents of struggle, when in actual fact the strikes occurred through the workers' own self-organisation, and the unions were the ones denouncing the strikers and ordering them back to work. It's quite interesting to look at the March edition of S.ALT's magazine, where directly opposite an article praising the C.F.M.E.U. for building a house for the Ampilatwatja walk-off, there is an article on the Pilbara strikes that makes no mention whatsoever of the role played by the same C.F.M.E.U. (together with the A.M.W.U., C.P.E.U., A.C.T.U. etc.) in undermining the strike and sending the strikers back to work. So here we see the leftist groups not only denying the ability of workers to organize themselves, but also supporting the very organisations that helped crush this self-activity.

This banner seemed to irritate the police. One cop claimed there was "no racism in Victoria." The banner was eventually taken down. Even so, the police continued to be visibly annoyed by it.

presumably intended to provide a rationalisation for its occurrence, was very crudely racist, and so too the discussion which it engendered. Being loosely defined, and responding to no apparent political base, the event and the organising group attracted little support outside of a small number of other, pathological racists, most of whom resided elsewhere, and none of whom—despite manly declarations to the contrary—actually bothered to attend. As for the A.D.L., A.P.P. and S.C.S., again, their failure to show suggests that they are even weaker in reality than they are on paper—or online, as it were.

Leaving aside the organisational incompetency of local bigots, at a more general level, public hysteria regarding the supposedly corrosive effects of immigrants and Islam on Australian society is one, perhaps inevitable by-product of the relentless torrent of propaganda from the state and corporate sector regarding the threat posed by Islamists. While this is a message still strongly associated with the former HOWARD Government—which effectively used it, among other Other phobias, to prolong its rule—it's also a factor capitalised upon by the KRudd Government. Recently, KRudd re-emphasised the threat Islamists still pose to the Australian public (Homegrown terrorism an increasing threat, says Rudd, *The Age*, February 23, 2010) as a means of justifying, at least in part, policies which are only

Nazeem Hussein from comedy group Fear of a Brown Planet shocked and delighted the crowd with his upfront assessment of Victoria's police force and race relations in Australia. His speech opened with the lines "Victorian police are so racist that…"

marginally distinguishable from his predecessor.

Leaving the context for such performances aside, the last occasion upon which local (Melbourne) bigots attempted to capitalise upon unease with the presence of Muslims in Australia was, by comparison to the antics of 'Melbourne Action Against Immigration and Islam', relatively moderate, even if the action itself was exceedingly bizarre. Thus in December 2006, a handful of concerned suburbanites declared their intention to organise a contingent of bikini-clad women to descend upon a mosque in Brunswick; not unexpectedly, the organisers abandoned their plans soon after it became clear that: **a)** there was nobody actually willing to execute it and; **b)** a tiny number of local fascists declared their support for the proposal. In the end, the mosque declared an Open Day and hosted a community barbecue, no bigots were stupid enough to march, and the day passed peacefully into posterity as one of the more bizarre examples of massively misguided community activism. ◆

It isn't a question of whether 'marxism' is more or less evil than 'anarchy'—both 'sides' have at times been expressions of the actual movement of the class against capital, but on the other hand the majority of what passes for anarchism and marxism is reactionary crap. We need look beyond the names, at the content of what various 'marxist' and 'anarchist' groups actually say and do.

The problem with the Trots isn't that they're "marxist" *per se*, and neither is it just that they are hierarchical. The attack on hierarchical forms of organisation is absolutely necessary, but insufficient. The problem with the Trots isn't that they take the wrong means (the party) towards the right end (socialism), but that their end is wrong as well. Rather than the destruction of power and the liberation of humanity, they seek the capture of state power. Rather than the abolition of work, they seek its planned reorganization and extension. So the problem's not that the Trots are hierarchical marxists, but rather that they are "leftist". I am using "leftist" with a specific meaning that is different to the one many anarchists are familiar with (and it is a term that could be applied to some anarchist groups as well): it means that certain groups function as "the left wing of capital". That is, while their rhetoric may appear anti-capitalist, the role these groups play in capitalist society is to rein struggles in, and reintegrate them back into capitalism. The "left-wing of capital" recuperates struggles—it strips them of what is radical, and diverts them back into capitalist avenues, it represents the class within capital rather than help struggles to go beyond it. Conal quips that "we all know a nice trotskyist… but it's not the nice ones you have to worry about". I would go further and say that even if all leftists were nice and had the best of intentions, the role they play makes them just as reactionary. This role takes two forms—that of individuals, and that of groups.

As individuals, leftists take on the role of the militant. They are unable to acknowledge and resist their own alienation, and therefore unable to understand what it is that makes them 'radical'. Rather than struggle against their own alienation to assert their own needs in their everyday life, they struggle out of a sense of guilt and duty, and involve themselves in pointless routine activism over struggles elsewhere, while being unable to relate such struggles to their own lives. Such activism tends to be superficial and spectacular, and doesn't even alter the material reality of

…both 'sides' have at times been expressions of the actual movement of the class against capital, but on the other hand the majority of what passes for anarchism and marxism is reactionary crap.

A RESPONSE TO 'ANARCHY V. MARXISM.'

BY SPAßMACHINE

There is a lot that has happened under the name of marxism which is quite indefensible, but it is a mistake to tar everything 'marxist' with the same brush. Neither anarchism nor 'marxism' are homogenous wholes, and while many prominent marxist groups are not explicitly opposed to the state, that same can be said of many anarchists.

'Marxist' ignores the large contribution to the theoretical and practical critique of this society made by numerous explicitly anti-statist groups, who've been influenced by Marx to various degrees. It ignores the critique of the party by the German-Dutch left communists and the critique of democracy and exposition of capitalism in Russia by the Italian communist left—lessons learned from direct experience of revolution and counter-revolution. It ignores the experience of the situationists and the Italian workerists in the wave of near-revolutions in the late-60s–early-70s, their analyses of the changing nature of exploitation and the domination of capital over every aspect of our lives, and the changing possibilities for combating it.

None of these groups has the last word on revolutionary theory and practice, but like the makhnovists in the Ukraine and the anarchists in 1930s Spain, all have been genuine expressions of the struggle of the class against capital, and all have drawn concrete lessons from the experience of the class struggle in revolutionary situations, which remain useful and relevant today.

This article is in reference to 'Anarchy v. Marxism', which appeared in **Melbourne Black,** vol.1, no. 1 (March 2010), pp 24–27.

BASH BACK! (MELBOURNE)

A Queer Anarchist direct action network

Points of Unity:

1. Fight for liberation. Nothing more, nothing less. State recognition in the form of oppressive institutions such as marriage and militarism are not steps toward liberation but rather towards heteronormative assimilation
2. A rejection of Capitalism, Imperialism and all forms of State power.
3. Actively oppose oppression both in and out of the "movement". All oppressive behaviour is not to be tolerated.
4. Respect a diversity of tactics in the struggle for liberation. Do not solely condemn an action on the grounds that the State deems it to be illegal.

Website:
http://bashbackmelbourne.wordpress.com

Email:
bash_back_86@riseup.net

BashBack (US) website:
http://bashbacknews.wordpress.com

No Gods, No Masters!

MARRIAGE= BULLSHIT. ANARCHY IS A FAG. ◆ BY BENNY RUDEBOY

> "Baby, this shit we got together, it's so good we gotta get the government in on this shit. We can't just share this commitment 'tweenst us. We need judges and lawyers involved in this shit, baby. It's hot!"
>
> **—Doug Stanhope**

I figured that this time I would bring up something that seems to have been on the agenda of the L.G.B.T.I.Q. community. Well the mainstream Gay media would like us to think so anyway. This of course is same-sex marriage. Personally I see it as a non-issue in context of the cause of Queer liberation but heteros and other Queers tell me that it is the be all and end all of the struggle in this country and is much more important than the other problems we face. They say that once we have the right to get married then other issues will be easier to deal with… **bullshit**!

Oh but how can you not support other people's desire to want to marry even if you don't want it for yourself? I get this question all the time from everybody once they hear that I am against this push for "marriage equality". I am not just against same-sex marriage, I am against marriage of all forms be it hetero or

Were there any experiences, anecdotes, etc that didn't make it into the documentary that you'd like to share with *Melbourne Black*'s readers?
Fascism was the response of the nation state to capitalist crisis. The nation state has now been superseded by the market state—the nation state was fundamentally concerned with national development, now the state prioritizes facilitating financial flows….the response of the market state to capitalist crisis will not be fascism, but something for which we do not have a name…it is part-narco, part-corporate and part-private military company and all nasty! This new social formation is being experimented on the Mexico–U.S. border, Iraq, Afghanistan… We gotta get with the program in understanding not only what is happening, but also, how we can respond to the new forms of terror being experimented with in 'the underbelly of empire'.

What do you think the relationship is between journalism and social movements?
Journalism at its best is a form of story-telling at the cutting-edge of the culture & history. Because of this journalism can really have a massive impact on how we perceive the world and even how it is structured. Social movements at their best are also concerned with social change, so it isn't a great leap to see how working in the media can be a form of activism. The challenges we currently face involve the possible demise of journalism and perhaps even the collapse of many social movements because what we are presently dealing with is outside the realms of what has traditionally constituted social movements. I sometimes wonder, from where the new imaginary spaces will emerge to allow new possibilities to emerge?

In your documentary and at a talk for L.A.S.Net, you have referred to this idea of Juarez being a social laboratory. What signs do you see that the economic-military model in Juarez is being reproduced or adapted to other circumstances?
It is a difficult thing to accept but we need to realize that what is happening on the Mexico–U.S. border is part of a continuum that spans Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Colombia. It is a series of experiments on the future of war, terror and economy. We gotta start making the links in regards to the emerging global new world order. An obvious example is how what is happening on the border of Mexico–U.S. in regards to migrants is being exported in so many ways right around the world, but it doesn't stop at the questions of migrants. I expect that when climate change really starts to make an impact, and the State is unable to effectively respond, it is when the social experimentation that is underway on the Mexico–U.S. border is going to be exported globally. ◆

You can find *La Frontera* on the ABC website at:
http://tinyurl.com/lafrontera

I have never even dreamt of before. After years of working in community radio I felt I needed a new horizon to walk towards, so I tried my hand and making radio docos. For my first radio doco 'awakening from history?', which examines how intergenerational trauma works in the north of Ireland, I won a Walkley award. This gave me a platform to have another go at storytelling at a new level with a growing audience. *La Frontera* is my second doco for the A.B.C.

What sorts of resources (physical and financial, but also social connections, knowledge, and experience) were most important in the production of this documentary?

Making docos, especially in war-zones, is a very tricky business. The money is terrible. I do not have a job in the media and what I was paid covered only a small fraction of the costs. In dangerous places you need contacts. Without good contacts I won't leave my front porch. Basically, you, the people you are working with and the people you talk to could all be killed and as such, you really gotta be on your toes, not take unnecessary risks, etc. I would suggest that if you seriously want to get into this line of work it would also help if you reflect on how far you are willing to go and the price you are willing to pay etc. Sort this shit out before you leave, don't figure out this work ain't for you one dark evening on a quiet lane.

Then there is the research—you need to rapidly get up to speed on an area and this might also include learning a language. Being a voracious reader helps. Knowing your shit shows the people you are speaking to that you are serious and quite quickly the discussion can be taken to new levels.

What lessons do you hope Australian activists draw from your documentary? What lessons did you draw from the experience?

Australia is a big bubble. Blackfellas and homeless folk are having a rough time, but largely, we are protected from the incredible violence and destruction that stalks this planet. At so many levels I am a benefactor of imperialism, but at the same time poor folks in Mexico and so many other parts of the world live like they do, because we live as we do. This is one of the central contradictions of being from the first world… I don't know how long this bubble is gonna last, but when it pops—and I fear it is not as far away as many of us would like—it is going to *burn!* How are we going to respond to this sort challenge? I don't have the answers but I reckon we gotta start asking some new questions.

non-hetero. Let's have a refresher explanation of what marriage was and in some cases still is; a legal method for keeping property within specific families/dynasties which back in the day used to include slaves and women. It reinforces patriarchal family values and pushes the notion that a family is made up of Mum, Dad and the kids. It is state enforced monogamy that further consolidates privilege. Would real change come about if we challenged and got rid of privilege instead of embracing it as marriage only allows the few to have these entitlements? Furthermore as an Anarchist, I believe that any relationship based on love be it monogamous or polyamorous should not have to register with the state.

What really infuriates me to the point of wanting to scream like a wounded animal is how the Gay marriage movement has turned us from a fierce force for radical change to a single-agenda assimilationist group that just wants the reactionary white picket fence lifestyle. As was said by Quentin Crisp, "don't keep up with the Jones's, just drag them down to your level". Of course marriage will allow us to settle down, stop dancing and casually screwing, stop protesting, stop subverting the norm, have kids move next door and just vanish into the ether. We wont have to be political ever again so the hetero-fascists can live in peace without having to worry about these sexual deviants tainting their lives.

I just find it absurd that with all the blatant and brutal oppression of Queers abroad we sit by and demand the right to marry. Uganda has a bill proposed that will allow the state to imprison those found to be 'committing acts' of homosexuality for life (thanks to an amendment execution was removed as a punishment). Those who advocate for the rights of Ugandan Queers can be imprisoned for up to seven years for 'promoting' homosexuality. It becomes what I would call "a crime of being." But let's not bother ourselves about them, they are just people of colour in a land far, far away from us so they don't really count…can we get married now?

Where do we have the space to resist this agenda that is constantly forced upon us? I saw a very well written placard at Pride March this year and it read: "If I don't want to get married do I still belong here?" I giggled at the subversiveness of it but I sighed as well in despair upon realising the reality of what we seem to have become.

It's the silver bullet isn't it folks? A.I.D.S. will just vanish, Queer teens will stop killing themselves, people wont be bashed at beats, Trans folk wont be oppressed by society, sexual racism will wither away, the homeless Queers will live happily ever after, domestic violence wont be an issue anymore, the wars our governments are involved in will be over, workers will have control of their lives and workplaces, wealth will be redistributed. **Wrong**!

Why fuck are our alleged allies in our struggle white middle-class Gays? Why don't we embrace the Genderqueer, Trans, single parents, prisoners, Indigenous peoples, migrants, kinksters and other beautiful people who make up the Queer community. Oh we don't want to appear to be too threatening to those heteros because they won't give us our rights. Fuck that, we are creative and brave enough to challenge oppression in our own way and not fall in line with the status quo in the process.

Any comments or criticism can be sent to: bash_back_86@riseup.net

I am more than happy to keep an open line of communication with all interested. ◆

AN INTERVIEW WITH COLM McNAUGHTON.

BY SEAMUS

This interview is intended as an exploration of how choices of struggles and context inform how groups organise and what actions they take; and further, to seek perspectives of how solidarity as an organising principle should operate.

I THINK I went to his talk because I had nothing else on. Or maybe I hadn't seen any of the L.A.S.NET people in a while and wanted to catch up. Or maybe I wanted to broaden my horizons or some bullshit. I really don't remember. I do remember thinking that my friend's description of Colm McNaughton's talk, "Something about drug gangs and Juarez, Mexico," didn't sound *particularly* fascinating.

It wasn't. It was downright horrifying. Colm's talk, based on his work for his documentary, *La Frontera*, explored the connections of the drug trade, globalisation, imperialism, and the global rise of mercenary armies. Those ingredients alone are enough to lead to a situation which, Colm claimed, we could only describe with "theological" language. When we looked at Juarez, the epicentre of global disaster capitalism, we found ourselves unable to describe it short of "hell on earth." I don't want to tell you every aspect of that hell, principally because Colm does a better job of it in his documentary, so I would rather direct you there. If your experience of these revelations is anything like mine, it will be forty-five minutes well-spent. Though you may need to go cry in a corner afterwards.

I will only raise one criticism of Colm's theories. He claimed that the lawless, murderous, destructive capitalism he discovered in Juarez represents the future of the world as American empire declines (see his explanations below). While the fall of the empire will not be a pleasant experience (did you know a shark can "awaken" and bite your leg off even after it's been "dead" on the deck of a boat for a good ten minutes?) we must remember that the hyper-reality of violence we see in Mexico is only sustained by imperial intervention (consumption of drugs, provision of guns). If we have any hope, it is that these hells on earth cannot sustain themselves without the devils incarnate.

S: For people who haven't (yet) listened to *La Frontera*, what is it about?

C: At one level my radio doco is trying to put the pieces together in terms of what is happening on the Mexico-United States border. What I mean by this is that usually when covering the borderlands the mainstream media focuses on one dimension such as the ongoing killing of women in Juarez, or the daily massacres, but in taking this surface-level-perspective they do not actually understand the enormity and the complexity of what is happening. Free trade, the narcos (powerful Mexican drug cartels), the us 'war on drugs', northwards migration, the rapid militarization of the Mexican state and the police state in the united states, the brutal killing of women, corruption and poverty are all inter-related.

At another level my doco is about what is coming, which we can get a glimpse of because this region is 'the underbelly of empire'. What I mean by this is, is that as *pax americana*—the globe as defined by the dominant hegemon—starts to decline, there are forms of social experimentation underway in this region that is already directing and framing the direction of capitalism on a planetary-scale. Basically, new regimes of terror are being prepared and tested in this region. It is pretty scary stuff but we gotta get ready.

How did you end up making *La Frontera*?

One is always confronted with choices about how to respond and engage with mainstream capitalist culture. I don't want to live in a ghetto nor do I want my brain to be locked down by self-defeating self-talk. We need to imagine new ways to live together and we need new ways to engage people in this discussion. Doing docos for the ABC gives me an audience that